DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC BECOMES SOVEREIGN STATE

All Soviet supervision of the internal and external affairs of the German Democratic Republic has ceased, it was officially announced in Moscow on March 25th.

Soviet occupation troops will remain temporarily in East Germany to guarantee security as laid down by four power agreement; the functions of the Soviet High Commissioner in Germany will be limited to security questions and liaison with the western allied authorities on all-German questions arising from four power agreements.

The Soviet Government declaration specifically laid down that in future the German Democratic Republic would be at liberty to make its own decisions on both internal and external affairs, including relations with West Germany.

(Full text of Soviet announcement on page 50)

"We Want Friendship with All Nations" — East German Government

Greeting the Soviet declaration, the Government of the German Democratic Republic stated:

"The German Democratic Republic is now a sovereign state, carrying out a policy of democracy, peace and European security in accordance with the Four Power agreements.

"West Germany, on the other hand, has been reduced to a dependent and degrading status as a result of the policy of the three western powers and the Adenauer government. West Germany is bound by the Occupation Statute of the three western powers, and runs the danger of being enslaved for 50 years by the Bonn and Paris war treaties.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic is convinced that such an unworthy state of affairs in West Germany cannot be of long duration, since it stands in contradiction to the national interests of the German people and the needs of European security . . .

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic is, as previously, ready at all times to conduct negotiations with the representatives of West Germany aimed at reaching an understanding on all questions in dispute in such a way that peace is secured and an independent, united, democratic and peace-loving Germany is established.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic declares its readiness to develop and maintain good friendly relations with all nations on the basis of mutual respect and equality of rights."

West German Spring Fashions

(From "Quick", Munich)

EAST GERMAN ELECTIONS IN AUTUMN

The East German Government will propose the holding of general elections in East Germany this autumn, Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht told the 4th Party Congress of the Socialist Unity Party, meeting in Berlin on March 30th.

The next number of GERMAN REPORT, dated April 16th, will bring full reports of the discussions and decisions of this congress.

G.D.R. BECOMES SOVEREIGN STATE

Full Text of Soviet Declaration

On March 25th 1954 the Government of the USSR published the following declaration on relations between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic:

The Government of the Soviet Union pursues undeviatingly the course of settling the German problem in accordance with the interests of consolidating peace and of securing the national reunification of Germany on a democratic basis.

These aims shall be served by practical measures to bring East and West Germany together, to hold free all-German elections, and to conclude a peace treaty with Germany.

Despite the efforts of the Soviet Union, no steps were taken, at the recent Berlin Conference of the foreign ministers of the four powers, to restore the national unity of Germany and to conclude a peace treaty.

In view of this state of affairs, and as a result of negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Government of the German Democratic Republic, the Government of the USSR believes it is necessary to take now, before the unification of Germany and the conclusion of a peace treaty, further steps in the interest of the German people. These steps are:

1. The Soviet Union assumes the same relations with the German Democratic Republic as with other sovereign states.

2. The German Democratic Republic will be at liberty to make its own decisions on internal and external affairs, including the question of relations with West Germany.

2. The Soviet Union will retain in the German Democratic Republic the functions connected with the guaranteeing of security arising from obligations resting upon the USSR under four power agreement.

The Soviet Government has taken note of the declaration made by the Government of the German Democratic Republic that it will fulfil the obligations arising for the German Democratic Republic from the Potsdam Agreement regarding the development of Germany as a democratic and peace-loving state, as well as the obligations connected with the temporary presence of Soviet troops in the territory of the German Democratic Republic.

3. The supervision of the activity of the state organs of the German Democratic Republic, hitherto exercised by the High Commissioner of the USSR in Germany, will cease.

In accordance with this decision, the functions of the High Commissioner of the USSR in Germany will be limited to those questions connected with the guaranteeing of security, as stated above, and with the continuance of the necessary liaison with the representatives of the occupation authorities of the USA, the United Kingdom, and France on questions of all-German character arising from the agreements of the four powers on Germany.

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The Government of the USSR believes that the existence of the "Occupation Statute" laid down for West Germany by the USA, the United Kingdom and France, is not only irreconcilable with democratic principles and the national rights of the German people, but also, under the present circumstances one of the main obstacles to the national reunification of Germany, since it makes more difficult a rapprochement between East and West Germany.

McCARTHY IN BAVARIA

The American military authorities in West Germany have begun to insist on the sacking of Communists, left-wing Social Democrats and active trade unionists from factories doing contract work for the US Army.

First big wave of sackings has taken place in the BMW Motor Works in Munich, used as a repair shop for US Army vehicles. In February questionnaires were distributed to the 4600 workers of the factory, demanding detailed information on their families, relations, and political and social affiliations.

Sample questions included:

"Give the full names, addresses and places of employment of your parents, foster-parents, wife, parents-in-law, former wives, brothers, sisters and children."

"Give the names of all political groups, parties, associations, clubs, organisations, trade unions etc., in which you are at present organised, or of which you have ever been a member."

"Give the names of three guarantors; if possible these should be businessmen, but a doctor, lawyer or shopkeeper will also suffice."

First result of this McCarthyite inquisition was that on March 4th, 33 workers, all of them active trade union members, were dismissed without notice, receiving curt notifications stating: "Your presence on factory territory after 5 p. m. today will not be tolerated".

Further dismissals since then have brought the total of McCarthy victims from this factory alone to 42. Only left-wing workers have been sacked: a number of former active nazis working in the plant have all kept their jobs.

East German Trade Unions Call for Joint Talks

The trade union movements of both halves of Germany should hold joint discussions on ways and means of preventing the revival of militarism in West Germany, the Free German Trade Union Federation of the German Democratic Republic proposed on March 19th.

The East German Trade Union Federation proposed to the West German Trade Unions that representatives of both groups should meet to discuss:

1. Joint action to achieve a united Germany and a peace treaty.

2. Joint action against remilitarisation and militarist organisations in West Germany.

3. A joint defence of trade union rights.

4. Measures to democratise the economy in West Germany.

5. Increased interzonal trade as a measure against West German unemployment.

6. Cooperation between the eastern and western unions, exchange of delegations, and allied subjects.

West Germans Fight War Plans

Town Councils Resist

Dortmund: The City Council of Dortmund, British Zone, unanimously protested against the construction of demolition chambers in the bridges of the city. Lord Mayor Keuning, Social Democrat, declared: "Such preparations remind us of the work of Corporal Hitler, who plunged the German people into catastrophe".

Castrop-Rauxel: The Social Democratic and Communist town councillors united to pass a resolution against all war preparations in the locality. The resolution called on all inhabitants to report immediately to the council all military preparations for demolitions, so that counter action could be taken.

Lemgo: "The preparation of demolition chambers in bridges and viaducts is a criminal act, and must cease immediately" a resolution passed unanimously by the rural council of Lemgo stated.

Gevelsberg: The town authorities of Gevelsberg have forbidden engineers from the Essen constructional firm of Strabach to enter the town. The constructional firm had been given a contract by the provincial government of North Rhine Westphalia to prepare demolition chambers at various points in Gevelsberg.

Oerlingshausen: Mayor Kramer of Oerlingshausen announced that if engineers began to construct demolition chambers at any place in the town confines he would sound the fire siren three times. Fire brigade and population would then run the engineers out of town.

Kettwig: The city authorities of Kettwig refused to obey orders from the provincial government to install demolition chambers in the great Ruhr bridge, totally destroyed by the nazis in 1945, which has just been rebuilt. When building workers from another town appeared at the beginning of March and began work on the demolition chambers, municipal police prevented them from going to work.

COLOGNE SOCIALISTS REJECT WEHRMACHT

By a huge majority the Social Democrats of the Cologne District in West Germany have rejected remilitarisation and the formation of a new Wehrmacht.

At the district congress of the Social Democratic Party, held on March 17th, 162 delegates from a total of 187 voted in favour of a manifesto turning down a new West German Wehrmacht. The manifesto stated in part:

"We reject not only participation in the European Defence Community, but rearmament altogether, since under the present political conditions this would only strengthen the political and state power of the possessing classes, and lay the costs of the rearmament on the shoulders of the working masses.

"The struggle for the reunification of Germany must be marked by the unification and strengthening of the whole German working class movement."

Young Socialists Say "No"

Hamburg young Socialists have rejected conscription to a new West German Wehrmacht. On March 14th the district conference of the "Young Falcons", the Social Democratic youth organisation, unanimously rejected the planned conscription law which "was contrary to the desires of a large part of the German people."

Similar resolutions have been passed by the Young Socialists of Wuerttemberg and Baden, in south west Germany.

"MY PLANS TO ARM GERMANY"

By Theodor Blank, Adenauer's 'Shadow' Defence Minister

"... Of course, former German officers are employed in my office. There is no secret about this. In selecting them I have made sure, in particular, that no one is employed who was a nazi or who has been guilty of any crime whatsoever ...

"All the officers intended for senior appointments will be chosen by a personnel committee.

This committee will be composed of respected personalities, both civilians and former soldiers ..."

"Star", London, March 16th 1954.

It all sounds extremely innocent, until you know that one of the members of the "personnel committee" is Mayor General Freiherr Smilo von Luettwitz. General von Luettwitz commanded a nazi tank division in the invasion of France, and then in 1944 played a leading part in the destruction of Warsaw. After the war, the Polish Government requested his extradition as a war criminal, but the request was turned down by the U. S. military authorities.

PROFILE

FRIEDA HARTMANN — VILLAGE MAYOR

Old Hans Schwendler, the oldest inhabitant of the little village of Muckern, thirty miles south of Leipzig in East Germany, did not approve of it at all when he heard two years ago that a woman had come from the town to act as mayor of the village.

"Just one of these silly new-fangled ideas" he said.

Today he has changed his mind. "We can thank God for our mayor; I can't remember ever having a better one" he says. And almost everyone else in the village has a similar comment.

Mother of Two

The person who has managed to change the minds of such a large proportion of the 368 inhabitants of the little village of Muckern is a pretty dark haired woman of 38, mother of two children, named Frieda Hartmann.

The changes which she has seen in her life are typical of the changes there have been in the life of millions of her compatriots who today are puting all their energies into building a better Germany.

Frau Hartmann is a village girl by birth, daughter of a tailor with a little shop in a village near Altenburg. When she was a girl, she wanted to be a nurse; her father wanted her to learn tailoring. But there was no money for her to learn either occupation, and she took the only job she could get, as maid in a village inn, working all day and most of the night for a few marks.

War Starts

Marriage meant for her an escape from this slavery, but soon the nazis launched their aggressive war, and her husband was sent away to the front. In 1940 he was on occupation duty in Kamiena near Warsaw, Poland, and she went to visit him.

Things that she saw and heard there, and particularly the way in which the German troops treated the Polish population, made her think. Her husband refused to answer her questions, and told her to keep her mouth shut.

In the train which brought her home, she heard a soldier boasting about a lot of things of which she had previously only heard whispers — concentration camps, tortures, mass shootings, and so on.

She had never bothered her head about politics, but now she began to think, and when the war came to an end she was ready to greet the new way of life which peace promised.

She had to work hard to support her two young children — a boy and a girl. First she worked with the peasants in the fields, and later got a job in the paper mill at Lucka. Here she joined the trade union, attended trade union school, and began really to take part in building the new society.

Her husband had not returned to East Germany after the war, but had gone to West Germany, where he believed he could live better; he wrote to her during this period and suggested that she should join him there with the children. She made a quick visit to see what things were like: then she hurried back to East Germany, shocked by the neo-nazism and revival of militarism in the West, and confident that the German Democratic Republic was the place where she wanted her children to grow up.

Better Worker

She moved on from the paper factory to a job in the electrical department of a big nationally owned factory, always learning to be both a better worker and a better member of society. It was quite natural for her one day to apply to become a member of the Socialist Unity Party, for she had long been convinced that Socialism would provide Germany and the world with a happy and peaceful future.

She learned harder than ever, and soon Frieda Hartmann, who only a few short years ago had been maid in a village inn, found herself in charge of the factory library. In addition she had to organise the concerts and film shows in the factory.

The new responsibilities daunted her slightly, until she looked round and saw that the great majority of people in responsible positions in the German Democratic Republic had been ordinary workers or farmers only a few years previously.

Her work in the library, and as cultural secretary of the factory made her well known in the vicinity, and when there was sudden need for a new mayor for the little village of Muckern, Frieda Hartmann was one of the people to whom the local administration turned.

The old mayor had been a failure; the multiple tasks which rest upon the mayor of even the smallest village under a planned economy had been beyond him; would Frau Hartmann try?

She would.

She brought a breath of fresh air into the village. She did not "rule" like some village mayors try to do, but tried to get everybody to cooperate.

The village school was hopelessly inadequate, but it would be years before sufficient funds were available to build a new one. Frieda Hartmann called a village meeting, and got dozens of volunteers who were ready to help convert into a school the mansion of the Junker who formerly ran the village.

New School

In December 1953, the new school was opened, the finest school for many miles around. And the villagers of Muckern feel it is really their school, for they helped to build it, in 25,000 voluntary hours of work.

And what about her children? Her daughter is one of the proud pupils of the new village school, and she will be going on to high school soon. Her son is out at work already, apprentice in the Borna open-cast mines, and in his last letter he said that he had completed a technical course ahead of schedule, and got a commendation for good work.

Frieda Hartmann is away from her village this month, attending another training course, for she is still learning, learning to do even better work in making a democratic Germany.

(Based on an article by Margarete Ebelt)

3500 West Germans Go East

More than 3500 West Germans moved to East Germany in the first two weeks of March, it was officially announced in Berlin. Jobs are immediately found in East Germany for all persons coming from the west, since there is no unemployment here.

Peter Pfeiffer's Pickled Peppers

The "Sieg Heil" Diplomat

Nazi diplomat Peter Pfeiffer has been appointed West German "observer" to the United Nations in New York. GERMAN REPORT dated March 19th 1954 gave some details of his career, including the text of a telegram he sent to Berlin in November 1942, when he was serving as nazi consul in Algiers. The telegram concluded with the words: "Sieg Heil Führer und Deutschland."

Some further details on the career of this eminently democratic diplomat have since come to light. Here they are:

Herr Pfeiffer joined the German diplomatic service in 1926, and had an undistinguished career in various posts until Ribbentrop promoted him to the rank of Consul General in 1941. Pfeiffer promptly joined the nazi party, receiving membership number 8,128,186.

After sending his "Sieg Heil" telegram in November 1941, Pfeiffer was captured by the American troops, and interned until March 1944, when he was returned to Germany in the course of an exchange of diplomatic internees. He promptly went back to work for the nazi foreign office in Berlin, and continued to work there until the end of the war, when he was arrested and interned by the US military authorities as an active nazi.

After his release he was appointed director of the West German Diplomatic Academy at Speyer.

In September 1951 Herr Pfeiffer was attacked in several West German newspapers as one of the many active nazis in the West German Foreign Office. A special parliamentary commission established to investigate the charges recommended on June 18th 1952:

"Pfeiffer should, for the next few years, not be used in diplomatic service abroad".

The report of the parliamentary commission also contained the rather odd statement:

"The Commission notes with pleasure that Pfeiffer made no attempt to claim that he was in contact with the resistance movement (against Hitler) . . ."

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"The charges which can be levelled against Pfeiffer are not in any way so severe as the charges which can be levelled against other West German diplomats."

"Spiegel" Newsmagazine, Hamburg, March 24th 1954

"Bonn, Germany, March 21 — Thirty-four per cent of the 874 members of the West German diplomatic corps once belonged to the Nazi party."

"New York Times", March 25th 1954.

"De-pacification" of Street Names

Bonn, the capital of the West German Federal Republic, has a square named "Berta von Suttner Platz" after the well-known German fighter against war.

The square is now being renamed "Berliner Freiheit" (Berlin Freedom) in commemoration of the fascist rowdies who on June 17th 1953 tried to attack the state order in East Germany and launch a new world war.

Slovak Fascists Meet in West Germany

Slovak fascists living in West Germany held a rally in the Regina Palast Hotel in Munich on March 14th to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the formation of the Hitlerite marionnette government in Slovakia in March 1939. The rally was addressed by Professor Ferdinand Durcansky, former foreign minister in the puppet government.

The Munich weekly "Deutsche Woche", reporting this provocative rally, asked: "What would the French or the Norwegian Government do if Laval or Quisling were to hold a rally in Munich to commemorate Hitler's attack on their country?"

"Fuehrer's Decrees still in Force"

— West German Supreme Court

A decree issued by Hitler on May 19th 1943, granting German citizenship to foreigners who joined the SS is still in force, the West German Supreme Court at Karlsruhe has decided. The decision was taken at the end of December 1953, but only published on March 22nd this year.

The supreme court made the ruling in rejecting a Dutch application for the extraditon of a number of Dutch nazi war criminals who broke out of a Dutch prison and sought refuge in Germany.

"West Berlin Police Legal Heir of Gestapo"

— West Berlin Court Decision

The West Berlin police force is the legal continuation of Hitler's Gestapo, the West Berlin Labour Court decided on March 21st 1954.

The decision was handed down in the case of a former Gestapo detective, who returned to Berlin in 1950 from a prisoner of war camp in the Soviet Union. He applied for a post in the West Berlin police, citing the "war prisoners' law" which entitled prisoners to their former employment. The police turned him down on the grounds that they had nothing to do with the Gestapo.

He went to law, and the court decided that he was right, and that the West Berlin police "is the legal successor organisation because it has the same tasks and the same functions".

. . . But Jail for "Slandering" War Criminals

Communist town councillor Rudolf Macht has been sent to prison for four months in Hof, American Zone of West Germany, because he stated in a recent meeting of the town council that the nazi war criminals held in Soviet prisons were in fact war criminals. The court found him guilty on a charge of slander.

You Ask – We Answer:

ALL ABOUT BABIES & HOLIDAYS

"I have just had my second baby. We had no savings to fall back on, so we simply had to borrow the money to pay hospital bills. It will take us months to pay it back... How do women in East Germany manage?"

S. M. Seattle, U.S.A.

Nobody gets into debt in East Germany through having a baby. On the contrary, everything possible is done to help expectant and nursing mothers, so that they need not give up their work or suffer in health. At no stage is any distinction made between married and unmarried mothers.

Free medical attention is given all expectant mothers, either in factory clinics or in the local clinics.

From the fourth to the sixth month of pregnancy additional rations of butter and sugar and over ¾ pint of cheap milk daily are supplied. From the sixth month until the mother stops feeding her baby herself, the additional rations are 19 ounces each of butter and sugar monthly and 1¾ pints milk daily.

In cases of normal pregnancy a working mother gets five weeks' holiday at full pay before and six weeks' holiday at full pay after the birth of her child. In cases of difficult birth or of twins, she gets two weeks longer with full pay.

Overtime or Sunday work is forbidden after the third month of pregnancy and for nursing mothers.

To prevent employers from wriggling out of their obligations expectant mothers cannot be given notice during the time from the third month of pregnancy until six weeks after the birth of the baby.

Extra coal and a money allowance for the purchase of baby clothes are provided, and the local health authorities run free courses for expectant mothers in baby care and feeding.

The Department for Mother and Child in the Ministry of Health runs 13 holiday homes, in the mountains and on the sea coast, and in 1953 6,500 expectant mothers went for four-week holiday cures. All expenses were born by the Ministry of Health.

Between 60% and 70% of our mothers have their babies in hospital and the proportion is higher in country districts than in the towns.

All hospital expenses, including doctors' fees, medicines and any expenses caused by complications, are covered by the social insurance. If a mother prefers to have her baby at home, the doctor's and midwife's fees and other medical costs are all covered by the social insurance.

Special care is taken of premature babies and the very considerable expense involved in taking care of them (one fully qualified nurse is in charge of two premature babies) is born by the social insurance.

The social insurance system covers almost everybody in East Germany. The only exception is private business people employing more than five workers, and these can also join voluntarily and then enjoy the same benefits. Thus women who are not working get exactly the same treatment in hospital and are eligible for the same privileges, including holiday cures when the doctor considers it necessary, extra rations and free medical attendance.

Women who wish to have their babies in hospital but have no relatives with whom to leave their older children can send them to children's homes for a month or so.

There were at the end of 1953 33 000 permanent places in infants' and small children's homes (up to three years) where mothers who are for the time being not in a position to set up their own homes can leave their children in good hands. Some of these homes are weekly ones; the mothers take their babies home from Saturday afternoon to Sunday evening or Monday morning. Unmarried mothers get first preference to place their babies in these homes.

"What are the regulations concerning holidays in the German Democratic Republic, and what sort of holiday can an average worker afford to take with his family?"

The basic holiday for all workers and office employees in East Germany is twelve working days a year with full pay. This means, with Sundays, two full weeks. Cripples, the partially disabled and victims of fascism get three days extra.

Workers engaged in heavy work or at unhealthy temperatures or on any unhealthy work get from 18 to 24 working days with full pay.

Managers and technical personnel holding responsible positions also get from 18 to 24 working days with full pay.

Young people from 14 to 16 years get 21 working days and from 16 to 18 years, 18 working days with full pay.

Factory collective agreements concluded between factory management and trade union committee stipulate extra days of leave after long service or for outstanding work or in cases of specially hard or responsible work.

Time taken off for convalescent or preventive cures does not affect the basic holiday.

The Trade Union Holiday Service offers all sorts of possibilities.

There are hundreds of trade union holiday homes in the mountains, on the lakes and on the Baltic coast, where the basic 13-day holiday costs only 30 marks per person inclusive of everything; this is less than half the actual cost; the balance is made up by the trade unions. (30 marks is well below the minimum weekly wage of the lowest-paid unskilled worker.) Specially good workers are often sent away to such holiday homes absolutely free of cost, and every worker gets a reduction of 33⅓% on his railway fare for his annual holiday. Exchange holidays in the People's Democracies are also available for outstanding workers.

Holiday homes are mostly former private hotels, country residences and castles situated in the most beautiful mountain and seaside resorts.

A great difficulty has been that with holidays with pay for all, the existing holiday accomodation is not sufficient to deal with the masses of people who want to use it. The number of beds available at holiday resorts is being steadily expanded, however, and people are being encouraged to take their holidays at "off-seasons" so as to spread the load more evenly throughout the year.

Protestant Church Congress in East Germany

The All-German Evangelical Church Congress will be held at Leipzig in East Germany from July 7th to 11th, it was officially announced in Berlin on March 20th.

The church authorities expressed full agreement with the stipulation of the Government of the German Democratic Republic that the congress should not offend against the peace policy of the German Democratic Republic.

In particular the church authorities pledged themselves to prevent the congress being used in any way to make propaganda for the policy of the reestablishment of the Wehrmacht at present being pursued by the West German Government.

Did Hitler Exist?

The German Wehrmacht in the Second World War was completely free from nazi ideas, the West German "Frankfurter Allgemeine" stated in a leading article on March 3rd.

"The Wehrmacht knew how to protect the old Prussian-German ideas of honourable conduct of war from the National Socialist state leadership" the leading article said.

The Berlin progressive weekly "Weltbuehne", commenting on this leading article on March 17th, stated that the only logical conclusion of such a line of argument was to declare "Hitler was just a propaganda trick".

Tombstones

During the first week in March fascist rowdies repeatedly overturned gravestones in the old Jewish cemetery in Frankfurt/Main. Police made no efforts to stop the desecration.

Democratic
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Berlin W 8,
Germany.

RETRACTION PLEASE!

(Installment Two)

By the Editor

What happened so far: On January 7th 1954 the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews passed a resolution deprecating the growth of neo-fascism in West Germany. In the same resolution it was stated "in East Germany a similar position obtains, in that several well-known nazis are Ministers in the East German Government". On February 15th I wrote to the Foreign Affairs Committee calling for a withdrawal of the statement, since not a single East German Minister had been a nazi.

On February 23rd, A. G. Brotman, Secretary of the Board of Deputies replied, stating in part: "Our information ... was given on the basis of information from sources which we know to be reliable ... we have to recognise that there are possibilities of error in some of the details ... in the circumstances we feel it would be inadvisable to publish names and other details ..."

I replied on March 13th, pointing out that the reluctance to publish names of the alleged "well-known nazis" could only be regarded as an admission that the Board of Deputies had no confidence in the truth of its own allegation. The relevant portions of Mr. Brotman's letter of February 23rd and my letter of March 13th were published in GERMAN REPORT dated March 19th. Now read the next installment below:

From: A.G. Brotman, Secretary, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, London

To: John Peet, Editor, Democratic German Report, Berlin

March 24th, 1954

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of March 13th, and I have also seen the copy of the "Democratic German Report" of March 19th in which you, without the usual courtesy of asking my permission, purport to publish my letter ot you of February 23rd.

I use the word purport, because you have not published the whole of my letter, and I should be glad if you would publish also the part you omitted and for which you have substitu.ed a few dots.

Yours faithfully, A. G. Brotman

From: John Peet, Editor, Democratic German Report, Berlin

To: A. G. Brotman, Secretary, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, London

March 29th 1954

Dear Sir,

If you write letters to the editor of a newspaper, you must expect to see them published. The paragraphs which were omitted from your letter of February 23rd read:

"In this connection may I draw your attention to the publ:cation in the New York Herald Tribune of February 2nd of draft proposals for a Peace Treaty with Germany submitted by Mr Molotov to the 'Big Four' Foreign Ministers Conference at Berlin, on February 1st, and which included the following:

Political Clauses:

Paragraph 6 — All former members of the German Army, including officers and generals, and all ex-nazis wi h the exception of those who are serving sentences of court for the commission of crimes, shall be granted civil and political righ's on an equal footing with all other German citizens, enabl ng them to participa:e in the building of a peaceable and democratic Germany."

I did not publish this part of your letter for reasons of space, and because this clause of the Soviet proposal for a peace treaty with Germany was already well known to my readers: it had been printed in GERMAN REPORT on March 14th 1952, when originally proposed, and again on January 22nd 1954 at the commencement of the Berlin Conference.

However, I fail to see how this clause from a draft peace treaty which is not even under discussion at present, let alone signed, affects your monstrous allegation that "several well-known nazis are Ministers in the East German Governmen:".

When the Board of Deputies has made a public retraction of this libellous sta'e-ment I shall be glad to give you space in GERMAN REPORT for any criticism you may have of individual clauses in the Soviet draft for a peace treaty with Germany.

Yours sincerely, John Peet

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Last week I had to go to Leipzig on business. Some readers may be interested in details of the journey, since I have discovered, from letters and visitors from abroad, that the weirdest notions exist about even something so simple as taking a railway journey in East Germany.

First of all, I went to the railway station and bought a ticket. A second class ticket for the 130 mile journey costs 25 marks — the same as two good tickets to the theatre.

Punch With Care

Then I went through the barrier, where the ticket collector punched my ticket, as in all the other countries I have ever visited, and got into the train: a well-heated well-kept corridor train such as you may find anywhere from Calais to Cairo.

The loudspeaker on the platform boomed something moderately unintelligible, like station loudspeakers everywhere, and the train puffed off.

During the journey white jacketted attendants passed down the corridor every few minutes selling hot coffee, beer and soda water, cigarettes and so on. The "and so on" naturally includes Bockwurst, the fat pink hot sausages which Germans, particularly Berliners, both East and West, consume in great quantities, but which I personally find inexpressibly dreary.

With Bath?

The train reached Leipzig on time. I got out of the train, gave up my ticket at the barrier, got into one of the waiting taxis, and drove to a hotel. There I asked for a room. "With or without bath?" asked the man at the desk.

In fact the journey was very similar to a trip from London to Birmingham in Britain. Only important difference in fact was that during a short halt on the city boundary of Berlin, police came through the train, politely asked to see our identity cards, and passed on after wishing us a pleasant journey. Only reason for the inspection was to see that everybody was resident either in the German Democratic Republic or in East Berlin. Residents of West Berlin are free to visit East Berlin as much as they like, but must have a special permit to visit the German Democratic Republic.

It must be realised that the German Democratic Republic is a sovereign state, and like other countries reserves the right to inspect the papers of citizens of other states entering its borders. In addition, the existence of a large number of American-financed and nazi-run espionage and sabotage organisations in West Berlin makes it necessary for the People's Police to keep their eyes open.

Making Friends and Influencing People

"Hans Erich Haack, the (West) German Charge d'Affaires in Stockholm, lives in the same apartment house as the Soviet Minister to Sweden. He has received specific instructions from Bonn that he is not to raise his hat or to bow if he should meet his neighbour on the stairs."

"Spiegel" Newsmagazine, Hamburg March 17th 1954

Train journeys in East Germany are still not an untrammelled pleasure, of course. The war took a heavy toll of rolling stock and locomotives, so that the train service is still not as frequent as could be wished, and some trains, particularly at weekends, are very crowded. (I seem to remember this happening in other countries too).

Another minor but annoying point is that most of the steam coal mined in Germany is mined in the Ruhr, and the Ruhr lies in West Germany. Since American interference has throttled East-West German trade, locomotives in East Germany have to be fired with soft coal, or lignite, which we have in abundance. This is less efficient than hard anthracite, and in addition it produces a cloud of fine smuts, which seem to be able to find their way into the compartments even through tightly closed windows. These smuts are a minor but very convincing argument for German unity to anyone who has to make many trips by train.

And for the sake of truth I should add that my experience in going from Leipzig station to a hotel and being offered a choice of rooms is by no means typical of all towns and cities in East Germany. Leipzig suffered relatively little damage in bombing, and has always been very well equipped with hotels, so it is generally easy to get a room there.

In most other towns the situation is much more difficult, since railway stations were a favourite bomb target, and hotels generally cluster round stations. In fact the difficulty encountered by travellers in finding accomodation is one of the subjects very often raised in the very numerous critical letters published in the press here.

Bockwurst Again

To protect myself from any critical attacks by German readers who are enthusiastic bockwurst eaters, I hereby declare that I have not been inspired by vegetarians; I have no desire to ban bockwurst eating; I just do not like them.

Mothers-in-Law

When you next read stories in the big business press about "harried refugees streaming out of East Germany", consider this little news dispatch from the London "Daily Express" of March 16th 1954:

"A million people in the U. S. disappear every year. Chief reasons, according to the Tracers Company, one of the outfits which helps to find many of them: financial troubles, mother-in-law troubles, teen-agers' desires to be free of parents, and the Greta Garbo-like desire to be alone."

The establishment of a democratic Germany has not abolished mothers-in-law, of course, and people in East Germany afflicted with this trouble, or others, have an easy way out: they rush to West Berlin, spin a yarn about "persecution" and become "political refugees".

Incidentally, a growing proportion of the misled people who have fled to the West are now returning to the German Democratic Republic when they find that all that the allegedly golden West has to offer is unemployment and a crowded refugee camp.

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